

F a c t S h e e t

The President's Fiscal 2002 Immigration Budget

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Immigration Services

INS has made significant progress in increasing its productivity and improving customer service, primarily due to a two-year Backlog Reduction Initiative. In FY 2000, INS met its goal of completing 1.3 million naturalization applications while reducing average nationwide processing times to six to nine months. INS also completed 564,000 adjustment-of-status applications, more than in any other year in INS' history, and reduced the average processing time, which stood at 24 months, to 17 months nationwide.

INS also streamlined the Green Card renewal process, cutting the processing time in half to 90 days and reduced the average processing time for employment petitions to 90 days from 18 months. By transmitting fingerprints electronically to the FBI, INS decreased the average processing time for background investigation checks from 21 days to less than a week. The agency also expanded customer access to its toll-free National Customer Service Center by expanding the live assistance area across the U.S. mainland, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. In FY 2001, INS continues to work diligently to meet its goal of completing 800,000 naturalization and 800,000 adjustment-of-status applications.

To sustain these efforts in FY 2002, the INS budget includes \$1.4 billion for Immigration Services as follows: \$1.3 billion for the Immigration Examinations (Exams) Fee Account (funded solely through the collection of fees from applicants and petitioners); \$16 million for the H1-B Non-Immigrant Petitioner Fee Account (funded from the INS' 4-percent share of the H1-B petitioner fees); and \$86.5 million under the Salaries and Expenses Account. These resources will allow INS to continue its FY 2001 completion goals for naturalization and adjustment of status, while absorbing more than 1 million additional applications and petitions that are expected to be filed in FY 2002 under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act. Most importantly, these funds will allow INS to embark on an ambitious initiative to attain the President's six-month processing standard for all applications and petitions.

Achieving a Universal Six-Month Processing Standard

To achieve a six-month processing standard for all applications and petitions, INS plans to devote **\$100 million** toward backlog reduction in FY 2002. These funds represent the first installment of the President's five-year \$500 million initiative to achieve and maintain a universal six-month processing standard for all immigration applications and petitions while providing quality service to all INS customers.

Significant Challenges Ahead

INS faces significant challenges in the years ahead: Managing and responding to new and changing workloads, ensuring process integrity and positioning itself for the future. Over the last several years, INS has seen a dramatic rise in the number of

applications and petitions received. The LIFE Act amendments, which were signed into law in December 2000, alone may add an additional caseload of 2.3 million applications/petitions in FY 2001. An additional 1.2 million LIFE applications and petitions are expected in FY 2002. Combined with the current 6 million applications received annually, the additional workload equates to a 29-percent increase over a two-year period.

Because this additional workload will strain the existing infrastructure, INS is exploring new ways of doing business to manage the new workload effectively while continuing to aggressively reduce the existing backlogs. Besides increased productivity, INS continues to work towards achieving process integrity through its quality control and anti-fraud efforts. Most importantly, INS strives for excellence in customer service through process reengineering, use of new technology and increased public accessibility to information and services.